

LIBRARY
USE ONLY

2056.62 W547 1982Z

F 2056.62 W547 1982Z LAC



THE
NETTIE LEE BENSON
LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION
of
The General Libraries
University of Texas
at Austin



STATEMENT DELIVERED

BY

H. E. UNISON WHITEMAN
Minister of Foreign Affairs

OF

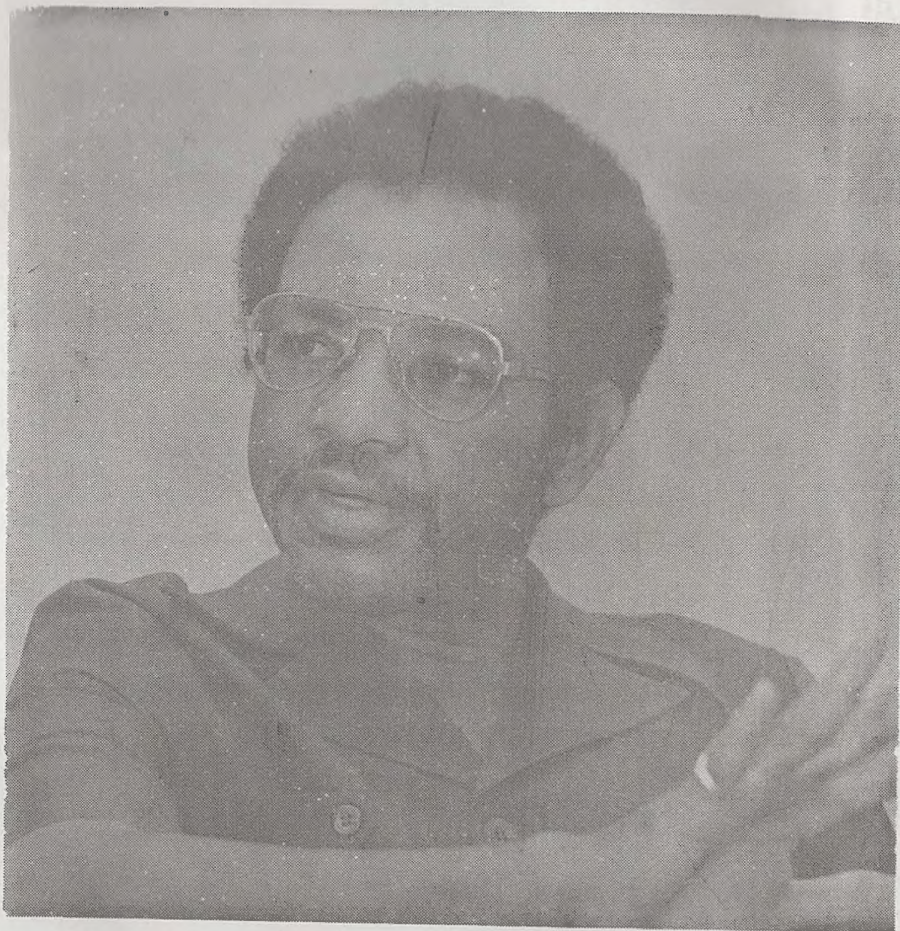
THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY
GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

TO THE

SECOND SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

Wednesday 23rd June, 1982



Cde. UNISON WHITEMAN

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Grenada delegation and also on my own behalf I extend to you our heartfelt congratulations on your unanimous election to the Presidency of this Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The convening of this Special Session on disarmament is as much a testament to our undying faith in the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as it is an historic and eloquent expression of our collective desire to live in peace.

This Special Session offers a great opportunity to focus on the social, political and economic evils of the arms race with a view to establishing a framework for the reduction in armaments and for enhancing international security.

Therefore it is a signal honour for me to address this Special Session in the name of the People's Revolutionary Government and in the name of the people of Grenada.

Mr. President, the current world situation is characterised by wars, confrontations, threats of confrontations, heightening tensions, a return to the cold war, economic crises, dissatisfaction with the present World Economic Order and an enormous build up of armaments. In many respects

these conditions are reminiscent of the period of the 1930s. In fact the current world situation differs significantly from even that which obtained at the time of the first Special Session devoted to disarmament merely four years ago.

Just four years ago the statements enunciated from this platform engendered great hope and optimism. However, today, as we reflect on those speeches, we cannot help but feel that our most cherished dreams have turned into nightmares.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, like so many peace-loving people the world over, the Government and people of Grenada are deeply disturbed by the quantitative and qualitative increase of weapons of mass destruction.

As I address this distinguished Assembly modern civilisation is at the very brink of an abyss, and man, the conqueror of inhospitable jungles; the domesticator of savage beasts; the creator of dazzling and sophisticated civilisations is threatened with self-extinction.

Nuclear holocaust is no longer in the realms of the unthinkable. It is today a real evil spectre that is haunting mankind. Is it beyond the capacity of man, to use his talents and ingenuity to chart a course that will ensure the survival and security of humanity?

Mr. President, apart from the acceleration of the arms race, and the growth in size, sophistication and destructiveness of nuclear arsenals, we have also witnessed the revival of gun-boat diplomacy and cold war crusades.

With the assumption to office of the Reagan Administration, war-mongering has once more become fashionable in Washington. Senior officials of the Reagan Administration have openly proclaimed that there are several things more important than peace. They are talking about pre-emptive strikes and about limited and winable nuclear wars. We have even been told that we will definitely survive a nuclear blast if we have an adequate supply of shovels. How reckless!

Mr. President, paranoia has reached such dangerous levels in Washington that a country with the potential to destroy the world several times over is ludicrously suggesting that the first, and only, International Airport now nearing completion in little Grenada constitutes a threat to its national security.

On the contrary, objective observers reject this distorted Pentagon view. For example, commenting on Grenada's International Airport in the May issue of the prestigious "Nation" magazine Christopher Hitchens says: (and I quote) "Often it is very difficult to separate truth from fiction in

allegations of this kind. But in the Grenadian case, life is made easy for the enquiring visitor. I spent some time on the island recently and can say confidently that there is no shred of truth in what the State Department says". (unquote)

This Second Special Session on disarmament is unhappily silhouetted against a background of escalating tensions in many regions. As we meet here the prospects for peace with justice in Southern Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean are rapidly diminishing. We meet to recommence the noble search for peace at a time when the clouds of conflict are gathering; at a time when the ugly shadows of war, death and destruction loom menacingly on the horizons of international relations; at a time when the Zionist military juggernaut is crushing the martyred people of Lebanon.

Mr. President, this is a critical hour for peace because hope and optimism have given way to a measure of despair and disillusionment. In our own region of Latin America and the Caribbean the oppressed peoples who have endured centuries of colonialist and imperialist domination are waging heroic struggles against blood-thirsty oligarchies that gorge themselves on the wealth of the masses.

Of course, the quest for peace cannot be separated from the quest for justice. Where there are unjust archais, and

oppressive social structures there can obviously be no peace. Peace and Justice are indivisible.

In this context, we reaffirm our support for the just and legitimate struggles of the people of El Salvador. We reject any theory which suggests that the genuine revolutionary processes unfolding in our region are hatched in test tubes in some parts of the region and then transplanted in others.

The People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada publicly endorsed the French-Mexican initiatives for a negotiated settlement in El Salvador. The government of Grenada has also announced its support of the framework for peace which was unveiled in Managua on February 21, 1982 by the President of Mexico. Recent events continue to demonstrate the bankruptcy of the policies so far pursued and emphasise the necessity for a new approach along the suggested French-Mexican lines.

We therefore condemn all attempts to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of the Salvadoran people. We also firmly denounce all attempts to intimidate and destabilise the revolutionary governments of Cuba and Nicaragua. We fully respect and support the right of both these countries to take proper and adequate measures to defend their sovereignty in the face of the clear and present danger posed by imperialist aggression.

Mr. President, the people of Central America and the Caribbean are in dire need of peace. We fully recognise that peace is an indispensable pre-condition for independence and development. We who have for centuries been pawns on the diplomatic chess boards of insensitive colonialists make this legitimate demand; that we be given a chance to develop our societies in the interest of our peoples free from all forms of outside interference and dictation. Our people do not possess the means to glorify and romanticise war, nor would we wish to do so. Contrary to the views being expressed in certain circles, to us, war is not the logical extension of politics; nor is it inevitable. War spells death, suffering and destruction.

As we continue the tortuous pilgrimage for peace, the Israeli military machine is pulverising Lebanon. The Zionist butchers are slaughtering thousands of men, women and children with the connivance and support of their imperialist sponsors. Today, we are once again forced to ask aloud: How many more Arab and Palestinian villages must be razed to the ground before Zionist Israel is stopped? How many more innocent children must perish before Israel is punished for its mindless savagery? How many more cultures must be bulldozed before we act in defence of the persecuted?

Mr. President, the Grenada delegation believes that we must act. History warns us that the appetite of fascists, expansionists and annexationists cannot be sated. Only resolute and decisive action can curb their voracious appetites.

In the face of Zionist imperialist aggression, we reaffirm our total and unconditional support for the heroic Palestinian people, and for their sole authentic representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization. The latest Zionist imperialist onslaught against the Palestinian and Lebanese people is further proof that there will be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East until there is restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people over their national territory.

Mr. President, the odious system of apartheid which is a creature of imperialism constitutes a serious menace to international peace and security. The murderous Pretoria clique is intensifying its repression of our black brothers and sisters in South Africa and Namibia as a result of the increased political, diplomatic and military assistance it is receiving from imperialism and Zionism. We reiterate our firmest support for SWAPO and the ANC. We reaffirm our total solidarity with the Frontline States and particularly with the fraternal governments and people of Mozambique and Angola, the most frequent victims of South Africa's racist violence.

Mr. President, as we look at these areas of crises, and wars, what do we find in common? What is the common thread? Whether it is in Central America, Southern Africa or the Middle East, we see U.S. imperialism arming, propping up and buttressing some of the most violent regimes ever known to mankind.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, my government remains firm in its belief that detente and lasting peace are attainable. Naturally, detente and lasting peace must be premised on the unconditional acceptance of ideological pluralism and respect for political independence and territorial integrity of all States. We resent the attitude of the self-appointed guardians of democracy who while piously ~~proclaiming~~ their acceptance of ideological pluralism at the same time ~~attempt~~ to isolate and destabilise those with whom they disagree.

Mr. President, the inequitable international economic order and the distressing conditions of the poorest third world countries pose a serious threat to international peace. Efforts towards international equity in trade and in the international financial system have all but ceased in certain quarters. For two decades the third world countries have pursued the goal of a New International Economic Order. Various North-South Conferences including CANCUN have achieved little beyond the recitation of platitudes.

In his message to the world given before the 34th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979, the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned countries advised that the fraternity of 95 countries which he represented was unanimous in its condemnation of (and I quote) "the persistent channeling of human and material resources into an arms race which is unproductive, wasteful and dangerous to mankind". (unquote). The awesome increase in the volume and value of arms sales has made that traffic the most fantastically profitable and one with the highest annual increment of all trading in the modern world.

This year world military expenditures will amount to some 600 billion dollars. One major power is expected to spend between \$1500 and \$2000 billion dollars on military activities during this so-called third development decade of the United Nations. Men of reason experience a sense of outrage in contemplating the picture of some 400 to 500 million people starving and malnourished side by side with this cruel and wanton waste of resources.

Mr. President, squandering resources of such magnitude on such unproductive and inhuman ends robs man of the necessary tools to satisfy the demands of production for living rather than for death; it generates poverty and accelerates the descent

towards a planet polarised still further between extremes of happiness and despair; of plenty and persistent want; of power and of dependency. The money squandered annually on implements of destruction may become even more significant in terms of its social cost.

It was estimated that at 1979 production cost levels, the money spent on the acquisition of instruments of mass destruction would have financed the following

600,000 schools with a capacity for
400 million children; or
60 million homes for 300 million
people; or
30,000 hospitals with 18 million
beds; or
20,000 factories; or
an irrigation system for 150 million
hectares of land on which, with the
application of appropriate technology,
food could be produced to feed more than
1 billion people.

In addition, when we consider the positive and far-reaching effects which would result from a re-deployment of scientists and technicians away from the manufacturing of war materiel to food production and agriculture and other areas where

science can be used for man's benefit; and when we contemplate the human resources which would thereby be released for development; we can easily see the enormous difference which disarmament and peace could make to life in the Third World or even among the poor and wretched of many western industrialised societies.

Thus, those multinational corporations and their special interest groups which profit from the production of armaments and weapons of mass destruction are real enemies of mankind.

In our region, as elsewhere in the world we have heard of the emergence of the new concept of Rapid Deployment Forces whereby thousands of military personnel will be mobilised within hours for the purpose of waging aggressive wars. At the same time in these very regions we know of cases where entire island states, devastated by hurricanes and other natural disasters have had to wait for months, or even years, for the mobilisation of even small amounts of disaster relief assistance. Therefore in place of these so-called Rapid Deployment Forces, Grenada today calls for a special programme of emergency economic relief whereby resources can be rapidly mobilised and channeled to states which are the victims of natural and other disasters.

Distinguished Delegates, the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada is conscious of the responsibility of all countries to assist in creating the necessary conditions for peace and security in Central America and the Caribbean area. To this end, the government of Grenada has initiated and has consistently promoted measures to ensure that the Caribbean is declared and respected as a Zone of Peace, Independence and Development.

We urge all countries to recognise the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region for the creation of a Zone in which, among other things, the introduction of nuclear weapons will be prohibited; in which all aggressive military manoeuvres will be banned; in which all existing foreign military and naval bases will be dismantled; and in which machinery will be established to deal with all forms of aggression including assassinations, propaganda destabilisation, diplomatic and economic sabotage and mercenary invasion.

Mr. President, we note with deep interest the peace proposals made by President Brezhnev at the 26th Congress in Moscow last year. We believe that these proposals can provide a basis for constructive dialogue and discussion. We also take note of the Soviet Union's pledge at this very forum a few days ago to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons. We see this as a constructive step. We are prepared to support any initiative

from any quarter that is genuinely designed to reduce the levels of armaments in the world and to foster peace, justice and security. In this regard we fully support the world-wide peace movement which is gaining momentum on all continents of this globe.

Mr. President, as modern man stumbles perilously close to the edge of the ultimate precipice, we believe that it is not enough to merely desire peace. It is our fervent hope that this Special Session will give all of us the confidence to persevere; the fortitude to foreswear war; and the courage to disarm and to work steadfastly towards lasting peace.

It is our fervent hope that this conference will lay the foundation for the realisation of specific and concrete formulas in order to achieve a balanced and progressive reduction in armaments throughout the world.

Let us continue to work towards the creation of a safer world with a brighter future for all mankind.

I thank you.